

# NATIONAL SECURITY LANGUAGE INITIATIVE



On January 5, 2006, President Bush launched the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) to further strengthen national security and prosperity in the 21st century through strategic language learning. Foreign language skills are essential to engaging foreign governments and peoples, especially in critical world regions, to encourage reform, promote understanding and convey respect for other cultures. These skills are also essential to the economic competitiveness of the nation. The NSLI initiative focuses resources on improving language learning across the educational spectrum and emphasize the need to achieve mastery of critical languages.

The NSLI initiative will dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical need foreign languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi and others through new and expanded programs from kindergarten through university and into the workforce. The President requested \$114 million in FY07 to fund this effort, of which \$26.7 million

will support programs managed by the Department of State. The NSLI initiative is a coordinated federal government program that includes the Department of Education, Department of Defense, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the U.S. Department of State.

State Department programs are providing new opportunities for American high school students, teachers, undergraduates and graduate students to study critical need languages abroad and are strengthening foreign language teaching in the U.S. through exchanges and professional development. State Department programs include:

**Intensive Summer Language Institutes:** Awards scholarships for intensive overseas summer language institutes. In this summer's pilot program, there were 4,200 applications for 167 critical language scholarships for beginning, intermediate, and advanced study in Arabic, Indic and Turkic languages. Institutes in Chinese, Korean, Russian and Persian will be added in 2007. Open to American undergraduate and graduate students.

**Gilman Scholarships:** Provides financial support to pursue overseas study in critical need language countries in semester or one-year programs for college credit. Supporting more than 200 students in 2006-2007. Open to American undergraduates who are Pell grant recipients (financially-needy).

**U.S. Fulbright Student Program:** Provides up to six months of intensive critical language training before the regular Fulbright grant period begins. This year, forty awards were made for study in Arabic, Indic and Turkic languages. In 2007, will expand to include Chinese, Korean, Russian and Persian languages. Open to Americans applying for the Fulbright student program in selected countries where critical need languages are spoken.

**Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants:** Provides teaching assistants in critical need languages to U.S. universities, colleges and high schools by bringing native speaking teachers to the United States for one academic year at the beginning of their careers. More than 200 critical language teaching assistants have been placed in U.S. classrooms in 2006.

**Teacher Exchange:** Provides critical need language teachers to U.S. secondary schools by bringing native speaking teachers to the United States for one academic year. Teachers of Chinese and Arabic participated in 2006, and Russian, Turkic and Indic language teachers will be added in 2007. In 2007, will provide American teachers in critical need languages opportunities for intensive summer study abroad.

## **Youth Exchanges:**

(1) **Summer Language Institutes:** Provides U.S. high school students the opportunity to study foreign languages abroad in intensive six- to eight-week summer institutes. In 2006, 46 American students studied Chinese and Arabic in Beijing, Amman, and Cairo, with plans for expanding the program in 2007.

(2) **Academic Semester or Year Abroad:** Will provide U.S. high school students the opportunity to spend high school semester or year abroad studying critical need languages in Russia, China, Turkey, India, and the Arab world.